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COUNTRY **USSR**
SUBJECT **Attitudes of the Soviet People toward the
Regime/Standards of Living**

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2. The worst anti-Regime sentiment is to be found in the villages. Except for two or three Party officials, it is almost impossible to find anyone still sympathetic to the regime in any given village. Some of the villagers still recall pre-Revolutionary days and many others recall the terrors of forced collectivization. The only possible exceptions to this rule would be the one or two dozen prosperous kolkhozes which

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receive State subsidies so that they can be used as model villages for publicity purposes. There are also a few other kolkhozes which enjoy a prosperity of a sort by engaging in illegal activities. [redacted] one kolkhoz in Middle Asia which was cultivating great areas of virgin land which lay contiguous to its own property. The proceeds from harvesting such crops were, of course, not reported, and represented pure profit. In addition, the kolkhoz received state premiums for exceptional yield per hectare. Other kolkhozes made a practice of sending men into nearby forests to strip bark off trees. The bark was then processed into rope and sold at a handsome profit for rope is in very short supply in the Soviet Union. [redacted]

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3. [redacted] most of the Soviet people expected changes after the death of Stalin. For a while there was an impression of greater freedom in the press after Stalin's death, and there was some relaxation of rigid labor discipline laws. However, after a few months, disillusion started to set in, and [redacted] by now it must be almost complete.

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4. [redacted] the amnesty granted to certain concentration camp inmates immediately after Stalin's death was a mistake [redacted] the general impression of the people and the regime as well. Immediately after the release of criminals a wave of crime and disorder started, and it is still out of control except in Moscow itself, which is now somewhat quieter. Conditions were worse in towns such as Kharkov and Lestov, where the former inmates were brought to be released.

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5. In the Army, there were special measures taken to ensure order and discipline after Stalin's death. It was generally expected that there would be some changes such as an end to the occupation. Many expected riots and uprisings.

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6. [redacted] the changes resulting in a greater number of ministries were brought about to insure more flexibility of management. The larger ministries are very difficult to administer, and there are simply not enough really capable executives to go around.

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7. [redacted] the standard of living has still not arrived at the pre-War World II level. It is still almost impossible to obtain a wool suit. The housing situation is about the same. New construction is barely keeping up with losses incurred from old buildings which finally have to be abandoned. Food is somewhat harder to obtain and, except for bread, it is more expensive. White bread, rolls, etc., are unobtainable except in the larger cities.

8. There was no change for the better after the death of Stalin in the standard of living. On the contrary, meat almost disappeared from the market during the summer and fall of 1953. Later cheese, vegetables, eggs and other fresh, protein-rich foods also became scarce.

9. Consumer goods are in very short supply. Some of the most elementary articles, such as a simple wash basin, disappear from stores for long periods. Actually, supplies of consumer's goods are not so scarce as they are irregular. During one month it might be impossible to find an electric iron in all Moscow, while plenty of kerosene lamps are available. The next month, the situation might reverse itself, with plenty of irons available but no lamps.

10. [redacted] It would be too dangerous to decrease war expenditures, yet they are not able to achieve more economic production. There are no surpluses to invest in greater production of consumers' goods. Imports from China, such as cloth, dishes, etc., are poor in quality and almost unusable. There is good footwear from Czechoslovakia but it does not begin to satisfy the demand.

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11. [] the reason for announcing increases in consumers' goods was the fact that the regime was unable to offer any political changes, so a rise in the standard of living was the only other alternative to satisfy a very real need for something that the new regime could offer to gain esteem with the people. Muscovites had hopes that there would be a greater supply of consumers' goods when the great new department store GUM was opened. However, they soon learned that the same old junk was being carried as before, and in no greater supply. [] whether the Government was playing for time, whether it made a mistake or whether it really believed it could supply more consumers' goods. In any case, [] by now the people are pretty well disillusioned with the Government's promises. 50X1-HUM
12. It is difficult to generalize on the attitude of the various social and economic groups in the past. Attitudes have varied according to the various periods since the Revolution. Peasants were comparatively better off during World War II since they had food, which was the only criterion of material well-being at the time. In all respects, the 1939-1940 period was one of the best in Soviet history. 50X1-HUM
13. [] the peasantry surely remembers the suffering it underwent during the period of forced collectivization and the worsened agricultural economy that resulted. [] the peasantry, while still discontent, is thinking in terms of the kolkhoz system as it exists rather than collectivization as it happened 22 years ago. 50X1-HUM

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